



News From The ...

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Jeff Miller, Chairman, 335 Cannon House Office Building, Washington D.C. 20515

IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 27, 2012

CONTACT: Amy Mitchell (202) 225-3527

VA Construction Projects Face Scrutiny for Delays, Accountability, and Costs

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Today, members of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs questioned VA officials regarding four major construction projects in Orlando, Florida, Las Vegas, Nevada, Denver, Colorado, and New Orleans, Louisiana, estimated to cost more than \$3 billion, as well as to receive status updates on VA major medical facility leases, which collectively have start up costs of \$442 million, across the country.

With extensive problems arising at numerous sites, Committee Members expressed frustration over delays, accountability issues, and potential cost overruns. Of the 55 major medical lease sites currently authorized, only five are open, 38 are behind schedule, and 14 are delayed three or more years.

“As the VA health care system has grown, it appears that we have come to a point in the Department’s major construction and lease program where the administrative structure in VA is an obstacle that is not effectively supporting the mission,” stated Rep. Jeff Miller, Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. “As a result, our veterans are the ones who are left without services, and our taxpayers are the ones left holding the check.”

The Orlando VA Medical Center was a main topic of discussion at today’s hearing. The project which is now expected to double its original cost estimates and has been delayed more than two years – the facility is not expected to open until fall 2013 – has faced numerous, costly issues including oversight, design, and significant changes.

“Clearly there are problems with the design, procurement of specific medical equipment, change orders, and how they all fit together,” Miller noted, “not to mention the lack of accountability and oversight within VA to address these systemic problems.”

VA officials admitted that the ultimate responsibility for the problems at VA construction sites around the country lay with VA.

“We cannot and must not allow the problems in Orlando, or elsewhere, to persist,” stated Miller. “It is vital that reputable, long-standing companies want to work with VA on these significant flagship projects that are so important to the delivery of care.”

Retweetables:

@HouseVetAffairs: #VA Construction faces scrutiny on major #VA construction for #vets:

<http://veterans.house.gov/press-release/va-construction-projects-face-scrutiny-for-delays-accountability-and-costs>

@HouseVetAffairs: #Vets deserve better than to wait for care, + #VA construction projects impede care, delays jobs & costs the taxpayer: <http://veterans.house.gov/press-release/va-construction-projects-face-scrutiny-for-delays-accountability-and-costs>

For more news from the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, please visit:

Veterans.House.Gov

Find us on Facebook at: [Facebook.com/HouseVetsAffairs](https://www.facebook.com/HouseVetsAffairs) or follow us on Twitter at:

[@HouseVetAffairs](https://twitter.com/HouseVetAffairs)

###